compared to standard size stockpots. In the preferred embodiment, the stockpot **12** has a diameter of approximately 11 inches and the height of the sides is approximately 16 inches. If the apparatus is to be used to fry a smaller item, such as a chicken, the height and diameter could both be diminished in roughly the same proportion and the same benefits would be achieved. The lid **14** may be provided to allow the stockpot **12** to be used for steaming, soups or stews, but is not used for frying. The stockpot **12** and lid **14** are preferably constructed of commercial strength aluminum (at least 2.5 mm thick), strong enough to withstand cooking on an outdoor gas cooker.

Raised rack **16** has a central rod **20**, which is attached at the center of round plate **22**, which further has feet **24**. Central rod **20** is attached to round plate **22** at its lower end, and has a loop **28** at the upper end. The central rod **20** must be securely attached to the plate **22** to ensure that the raised rack **16** will be sufficiently strong to raise a large turkey from the hot oil. The preferred method of manufacture is to insert the central rod **20** (preferably made of aluminum) through a central hole in plate **22**, flatten the end of the rod and drill two holes through it, and then bend the end 90 degrees and rivet it onto the bottom surface of plate **22** through the two drill holes. Other methods of attachment such as welding are also possible.

Plate **22** supports the turkey, and through the use of feet **24**, allows oil to circulate below the plate **22** and around the turkey. This design will prevent the turkey from being burned by contact with the stockpot **12**. The feet **24** are preferably manufactured from aluminum flat rod riveted to the bottom of plate **22** to raise the plate **22** approximately 1 inch above the bottom of the pot. Plate **22** is preferably round, as shown in FIG. **2**, with a diameter smaller than the diameter of the stockpot **12**.

The plate **22** is provided with a plurality of perforations **26** to allow oil to pass through the plate **22**. As illustrated in the Figures, plate **22** has a predetermined total area that includes perforations **26**. The plurality of perforations **26** define a liquid flow area. Preferably, the flow area is at least one third of said total area to ensure adequate oil flow. However, lesser ratios can be used. The number and size of the perforations should be designed to allow oil to pass freely, but also to allow a plate manufactured of aluminum to be strong enough to support a turkey of up to 16 pounds. In the preferred embodiment, the perforations have a diameter of 6 millimeters. The plate **22** is preferably designed with a diameter of 8 inches, which is large enough to accommodate and support a large turkey, but small enough to allow the oil to circulate around the turkey freely.

Grab hook **18** is provided to lift the rack **16** and turkey out of the oil. Grab hook **18** has a handle portion **30** and a hook portion **32**, shaped from round aluminum rod. The handle portion **30** is preferably in the general shape of a triangle, as shown in FIG. **3**. Alternatively, the handle portion **30** could be round, S-shaped, or any shape that would allow firm grasping by a human hand. The hook portion **32** is preferably bent at a 135 degree angle, and is placed inside a loop **28** provided at the upper end of central rod **20**. Many alternative methods of coupling between the grab hook **18** and central rod **20** can be used. For example, the central rod **20** could be provided with a hook, and the grab hook **18** could be provided with a loop. Many further examples of releasable coupling are possible and are within the scope of the present invention. The entire grab hook is preferably approximate 8 inches in length, to allow a user's hands to be far from the hot oil when the turkey is inserted and removed.

The frying apparatus **10** is designed for use with outdoor gas cookers. In the preferred method of use, an outdoor gas cooker is lit and set at a low flame. The stockpot **12** is then filled with oil, preferably peanut oil to an appropriate level to allow the turkey to be fried to be immersed in the oil. As discussed above, the stockpot **12** is designed with a relatively narrow diameter to minimize the amount of oil needed. A long-stemmed deep-fry thermometer **34** is preferable attached to the top edge of the stockpot **12**, to allow monitoring of the oil temperature as shown in FIG. **4**. The stockpot **12** is then placed on the gas cooker, and the flame raised to heat the oil to a temperature of approximately 325° F.

The turkey is prepared for cooking by thawing (if frozen), cleaning, drying, and removing the giblets and neck. The turkey may also be rubbed with seasonings and injected with marinade if desired. The turkey is then placed on the rack, with the legs facing up. The central rod **20** is placed through the center of the turkey body, with the breast portion of the turkey resting on the plate **22**. Inserting the turkey will cause the oil temperature to drop, so the heat must be increased to bring the oil temperature back up to 325–350° F. The temperature should be monitored using the thermometer at all times. The turkey should be fried for 3 to 3½ minutes per pound or until golden brown.

When the turkey is done, the gas cooker should be turned off. Then the grab hook **18** is placed through the loop **28** in the central rod **20** of the raised rack, and the turkey can be lifted out of the oil, as shown in FIG. **5**. The turkey and rack are then placed on absorbent paper and allowed to drain for a few minutes before serving, as shown in FIG. **6**.

Alternate uses of the present invention include frying of other poultry or meat products, or as a steamer with lid **14**. The raised rack **16** allows food items to be positioned over a small amount of water to be cooked by steam. The size of the stockpot **12** also allows large amounts of food, such as crabs, ears of corn, or tamales to be steamed at one time.

FIGS. **7–9** show a poultry support **50** including a poultry support element **52** connected to an upwardly extending skewer **54**. Support element **52** is shown as being a generally circular thin support plate **56** with one or more openings **58** spaced apart to provide circulation of oil through support element **52**. As illustrated, support element **52** has a predetermined total area that includes openings **58**. Openings **58** define a liquid flow area. Preferably, the flow area is at least one third of said total area to ensure adequate oil flow. However, lesser area ratios can be used.

Moreover, support element **52** can have any suitable shape or configuration that at least partially supports a turkey or other poultry thereon. Non-limiting examples of suitable support element configurations include: one or more radially extending rods, for example X-shaped or Y-shaped rods, or a grid shape. Moreover, support element **52** can be generally flat, wavy, concave, convex, or any other suitable shape. Thus, it is contemplated that support element **52** be solid, open, perforated, slotted, or corrugated.

Optionally, but preferably a spacing portion **60** extends downwardly from support element **52** for spacing support element **52** from a floor **62** of a cooking vessel **64**, as shown in FIG. **8**, to avoid burning the poultry located adjacent to support element **52**. Spacing portion **60** is illustrated as being integral with support element **52** and having a generally cylindrical wall that provides increased rigidity to support element **52**. However, spacing portion **60** can be of any suitable form or shape that serves to space support element **52** from cooking vessel floor **62**. In addition, spacing portion **60** can be continuous, intermittent, open, serrated or corrugated and may include one or more openings to permit increased oil flow.